

## Mentoring Program FAQs

*Mentoring is an opportunity to gain insight and understanding that is not usually available through more formal channels.*

*The Mentoring Program establishes mutually rewarding learning partnerships.*

*Partners are matched based on their interests and needs.*

### **1. What is the purpose of the Laboratory Mentoring Program?**

The Laboratory Mentoring Program is one element of an integrated system of career development resources being provided by HR-6 T&D. The objectives of the program are as follows:

- a. Develop and sustain critical skills and knowledge across the Laboratory.
- b. Promote the exchange of diverse capabilities and leadership experiences.
- c. Assist and encourage professional growth.

### **2. How does the Laboratory Mentoring Program differ from traditional Laboratory mentoring relationships?**

The Mentoring Program builds on the Laboratory's tradition of unstructured mentoring by providing a structured dimension to existing manager-employee mentoring and technical expert-post doctoral mentoring relationships. There are four key differences in the structured program:

- a. The Laboratory Mentoring Program is based on a philosophy of learning partnerships, where both mentor and mentee establish goals for the relationship.
- b. The Laboratory Mentoring Program partners employees from across the organization, as well as across groups within the same divisions.
- c. The Laboratory Mentoring Program offers specific events, such as a program orientation and bimonthly round table discussions to help partners initiate and sustain relationships and to provide useful information to partners in their areas of interest.
- d. The Laboratory Mentoring Program is structured and sustained by HR-6 T&D, who also provides a point of contact for partners when they need information or encounter any obstacles in the mentoring relationship.

### **3. How are learning partners paired?**

Learning partners may be paired in two ways. First, all program participants are asked to complete a *Mentoring Partner*

*Although HR-6 T&D arranges partnerships, the partners themselves make the final decision to establish the relationship.*

*Information* form, which provides HR-6 T&D with data on their areas of expertise and/or need. Participants are also asked to suggest potential learning partner candidates with whom they might be paired. HR-6 T&D facilitates this partnership by contacting prospective learning partners and arranging a partnership. Second, if a participant cannot suggest a learning partner, HR-6 T&D uses the data gathered from the *Mentoring Partner Information* forms to request a suitable learning partner from an appropriate Laboratory organization.

In addition, some mentoring pairs have already formed a partnership and are simply folded into the program.

*Learning partners establish their time commitments.*

*Time commitments vary based on partners' needs, but a commitment to invest time in the relationship must be made.*

#### **4. What kind of time commitment is required to participate in the Mentoring Program?**

Learning partners work together to establish meeting times that best suit their schedules. Most partners meet together once or twice a month—frequently over lunch—and communicate regularly via e-mail or telephone.

The mentoring relationships are tracked formally for one year, but many learning partners choose to continue their relationships for much longer. Such ongoing partners may serve as resources for the mentoring community and continue to participate in program events.

*Both partners have responsibilities in the relationship.*

#### **5. What are my responsibilities as a partner in a mentoring relationship?**

Mentoring is a partnership: **both** partners have responsibilities to ensure the relationship is mutually rewarding. Based on past experiences and lessons learned, mentors provide insight into organizational structure and culture. They also answer questions related to business strategies and work issues, act as a resource, and coach their partners in exploring career development and professional growth.

*Mentoring relationships are only as effective as the commitment made by each partner.*

Mentees also have responsibilities in a learning partnership. Mentee partners take the initiative to share their areas of interest and growth as discussion points for meetings. They also act as a network and resource for their partners.

*All information exchanged within a learning partnership is confidential.*

*Benefits should be mutual and should continue to evolve over time.*

*HR provides the framework that supports a successful mentoring experience.*

*HR works with partners to ensure mutual satisfaction in the relationship.*

*Learning partners respect each other's time commitments.*

## **6. What benefits can I expect from participating in the Mentoring Program?**

Benefits of the learning partnership should become apparent within the first few months and continue to evolve over the duration of the relationship. For example, mentor partners can expand their networks; develop their coaching, counseling, and management skills; and gain job satisfaction from helping fellow employees learn more about the organization. Mentee partners can learn more about the organization, develop networking skills, and gain insight and understanding in new areas of expertise. The Laboratory benefits through increased collaboration and communication among employees, sharing of expertise and resources, and the transfer of critical knowledge and skills that cannot be taught in a typical classroom setting.

## **7. What is the role of HR-6 T&D in the Mentoring Program?**

HR-6 T&D helps match learning partners, provides information and tools that help to sustain the relationships, and acts as a resource and coach to both partners if questions or issues arise throughout the program.

### ***New Partnership Policy***

It has been brought to our attention several times that some partners do not keep scheduled meetings and do not notify their partners. *This lack of courtesy is the exception, not the rule, for most participants in the mentoring program.* However, because this type of behavior can severely damage a relationship, as well as undermine motivation and participation in the program, the following policy is effective immediately:

Learning partners are responsible for establishing mutually convenient meeting times. If a learning partner, either mentor or mentee, misses two scheduled meetings with his or her partner without providing notification, that person will be automatically dropped from the LANL Mentoring Program unless he or she can provide an explanation of missing the meeting that is acceptable to both the partner and the program coordinators.

To implement the policy, a partner who has been “stood up” for two scheduled meetings should contact the program coordinators. We will talk with the delinquent person and work to resolve the issue.

*Program events are designed to meet partner needs.*

*Events are based on research and lessons learned.*

*Mentoring is offered to all UC employees.*

## **8. What kind of information and training will I receive as a participant in the Mentoring Program?**

Several program events are provided to all new learning partners:

**Briefing**—This self-learning package is sent to new participants to provide an overview of the program, define roles and responsibilities, and help establish a comfortable first meeting.

**Orientation**—This two-hour program provides partners with tools and strategies to maximize their learning partnership and establish goals for the relationship.

**Monthly Events**—HR-6 T&D also offers monthly events open to all learning partners based on their interests and needs. **Round table discussions** are offered on topics chosen by program participants. The discussions are conducted over lunch, led by Laboratory experts, and facilitated by the program coordinators. **Brief video-tapes and mini-workshops** are offered to increase knowledge of career development, leadership and organizational issues, and communication.

## **9. What if I find that I cannot meet my responsibilities as a learning partner?**

Learning partnerships, like any relationship, may change over time. Changes can occur for a variety of reasons, such as lack of time because of increased workloads or evolving goals that make a relationship less compatible. Whatever the reason, HR-6 T&D works to establish new relationships for those who need to be re-partnered. ***Both parties must be comfortable with the relationship.***

## **10. Do I need management approval to participate in the Mentoring Program?**

The management at LANL is committed to developing employees and supporting professional development programs such as the Mentoring Program. HR-6 T&D informs managers that people in their groups are participating in the program. Both partners are encouraged to include their participation in the development plan of their performance appraisals.

**Program Coordinators**

Sue Bargeloh, HR-6, T&D  
Phone: 667-8036, Fax: 667-8625  
[bargeloh@lanl.gov](mailto:bargeloh@lanl.gov), MS M589

Carol Ann Martz, HR-6, T&D  
Phone: 667-3589, Fax: 667-8625  
[camartz@lanl.gov](mailto:camartz@lanl.gov), MS M589

**11. How can I become involved in the Mentoring Program?**

The Laboratory Mentoring Program is available to all UC employees. Employees may contact the program coordinators to receive information about the program and a *Mentoring Partner Information* form. HR-6 T&D launches groups of mentoring partners several times a year. Prospective participant information is compiled in a database until a complete group of at least 15 to 20 partners is established.

*A Learning Partner Information Form is included below.*

Please contact the LANL Mentoring Program coordinators for more information about the program.

This information can also be found on the Mentoring Web site at

**<http://www.hr.lanl.gov/td/Learning/lmentoring.stm>**

6/6/00